sound reaches its maximum. It was shewn by two ordinary drinking glasses, each of which emitted the note C when a tuning-fork was applied to them. When one was held horizontally and the other perpendicularly, with the lips of each in contact, and a tuning-fork was placed at the intersection, *the sound ceased*, and when they were held perpendicularly to the tuning-fork (mouth over mouth), the sound was doubled. This may involve the reason why some cross-churches are very bad for hearing in.*

We repeat our suggestion that a committee should be appointed forthwith to investigate a number of buildings known to be good or bad in respect of sound. "Were this made a subject of inquiry, in the construction of all public buildings," says Dr. Reid, "our orators would not be so often exhausted by the mere mechanical endeavours which they are at times compelled to make when addressing the most silent and listening assembly; nor would the audience, in their turn, be compelled to exert an exhausting attention, in their anxiety to catch the mere verbal expression of the individual who is addressing them. A few examples would soon make most people aware of the difference between mere noisy prolonged reverberation and a sustained purity of intonation. And when the latter has been successfully attained, the human voice can then portray itself in all its commanding eloquence; its full expression dwells upon the ear; no jarring discord mars its harmony. It swells and dies away like the vast tidal wave which moves upon the ocean, and not like the noisy breakers, whose returning surge produces nothing but the most tumultuous and confused agitation upon its unequal shores." Exeter Hall has been spoken of as a very bad room, and the committee could not do better than commence their examination there, as the public might then possibly derive some immediate advantage from the remedies that might be tried.

MEMORANDA, THROUGH THE AID OF A "PERSPECTIVE" MEDIUM.

In inquiring into the origin and meaning of terms, we frequently discover singular instances of words becoming fixed in a sense opposed to their etymology: this is particularly striking in those adopted in architecture. The subject has several times occupied our attention, and is so far important, that it may continue to do so. Meanwhile it is interesting to consider the use of the word "perspective." Properly speaking, according to Mr. Fox Talbot, there should be two words, one derived from *perspicere*, to look through, and signifying a telescope, and the other the science, or art, of delineating objects upon a plain surface. This discrepancy is pointed out by Mr. Talbot in his late work on "English Etymologies;" and he argues, that the science should be called "*pros*pective, being the art of delineating a prospect, or view. And so it is called in Italian *la 'prospettiva,'* which shews the error we have fallen into." There may be also, some evidence of the want of precision in this term, in the constant pronunciation given by those who are not in the constant habit of using it; and these persons, called "uneducated," are, it seems, not in error in the use of "prospective," which appears to them, and is thus considered to be correct. It is clear that in speaking of objects or scenes to be observed or delineated, we should discriminate between the object itself, and the medium of conveying the impression: In the ordinary dictionaries, the word "perspective" is interpreted indifferently, as "a spying glass," "a view," "a vista," or as "the science of delineating objects;" and the propriety of, at least, the meaning first given, is shewn by the etymology. In old topographical works, we find any illustration, say of a mansion, called "a prospect or view" of whatever place, and "la prospettiva," when similarly employed, would seem to be strictly synonymous. Now the *science* of perspective is founded upon the supposition, or fact, of a medium being interposed between the object, or prospect, and the eye, which medium performs the office of conveying the impression, just as does the telescope. Admitting therefore, that Mr. Talbot's arguments are worthy of attention, and that "prospective" *may* be a very fitting name for the delineation of a prospect, we merely say, that the ordinary use of "perspective" as the name of the *science*, is capable of defence, as the science may perhaps correctly take its appellation from the actually *perspective* medium, its groundwork as a science. However, the use of "perspective" substantively and alone, to signify a delineation, is we need hardly say erroneous; obviously it should be used as an adjective.

We may further make our memoranda the medium of noting down the explanation of another use of the word "perspective," which has puzzled many commentators upon Shakspeare. In the Shakspeare Society's papers, (1844, Vol. I. Art. XXII.) Mr. Tomlins has given some corrections of the ordinary text of Shakspeare's plays, made by Sir Wm. Blackstone, great as a commentator upon a very different subject; but, as amongst the hundred other speculations about the great poet, it has been asserted that he was a lawyer, and proved, to the extent that almost any other similar opinion may be, from the internal evidence of his works, perhaps he may furnish a precedent. The notes are headed:—

"Cursory observations on Shakspeare, with a particular view to Sr T. H.'s emendations. A.D. 1746.

"The Quotations are according to y^e^ pages of y^e^ London edition in Octavo of 1745 (viz., Sr Tho. Hanmer's edition of Shakespeare)."

And amongst them is the following:—

"Vol. III., page 219, K. Rich. II., sc. 3,

> "Like perspectives, which rightly gaz'd upon
> Shew nothing but confusion; eyed awry
> Distinguish form.

The perspectives now used, are surely widely different from those used in y^e^ days of Shakspear! We should rather have wrote (as perhaps he did),

> Like perspectives, which gaz'd upon awry,
> Shew nothing but confusion; rightly eyed
> Distinguish form.

Besides that this Reading agrees with y^e^ sense, w^ch^ y^e^ other does not."

It seems not to have been the object of the contributor to make further comment upon these Commentaries of Blackstone, or perhaps the extract in question would have afforded sufficient room for it. The passage in the play, occurs not in any fifth scene, but in act II., scene 2nd, and reads thus:—

> "For sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,
> Divides one thing entire to many objects
> Like perspectives," &c.

It seems, that the word is here used in the manner to which we have objected; and possibly something like the child's toy, by which a building, delineated upon a horizontal surface, in a distorted form, is made to appear correct, when the eye is fixed at a certain point, might be what was referred to. But, in a note in "Knight's Pictorial Shakespeare," which, having been published previously, would have been worth alluding to in the article, the explanation is perhaps more correctly given thus:—

"These perspectives were produced by cutting a board, so that it should present a number of sides, or flats, when looked at obliquely. To these sides a print, or drawing, cut into parts, was affixed; so that looked at 'awry' the whole picture was seen, looked at *direct*—'*rightly* gaz'd upon,'—it shewed 'nothing but confusion.' Dr. Plot, in his 'History of Staffordshire,' describes these perspectives." This toy may indeed now be seen in many shops, and was probably that alluded to, as it agrees best with the lines preceding those quoted by Blackstone; and the other would require a more accurate knowledge of perspective than we are in the habit of ascribing to ordinary artists of Shakspeare's time. The art of delineating, though it had occupied the labours of many great men in Italy and England, was certainly inferior to the present time in one branch, that of linear perspective; and the state of this art would afford a subject for much interesting research, the more so from its connection with the early history of the drama. We know that in the treatment of perspective, the artists of the present day are honourably distinguished, though even less than their merits deserve, from the circumstance of the art finding its exercise mainly as a department of the profession of an architect, and coming, comparatively, little before the world. As scene painters, too, there are several artists of rare ability, not only as delineators, but as producers of designs, characterized by remarkable originality and great power of fancy.

THE IPSWICH MECHANICS' INSTITUTION COMPETITION.

Sir,—I am glad to be able to put you in possession of the facts of this case. I must first tell you, however, that a circumstance has occurred which places me, feeling most strongly as I do upon the subject, in a somewhat awkward position. It is no less than the receipt of an assurance from a member of the committee, a man above all suspicion, personally known to and respected by me, that the greatest care was taken and much pains bestowed upon the consideration of the designs, seven in number, and that to the best of his belief the plans chosen were the *best*. Now having fairly stated so much, I have no hesitation in giving you a sketch of the whole proceedings, such as they have appeared to those who, like myself, have watched them with some interest. The tale is a brief one.

There is resident in Ipswich a retired tradesman, a man I believe of great respectability, whose pleasure it is to invest his capital in the erection of dwelling-houses of different classes. He is like Oaric, "spacious in the possession of dirt," and among other precious things holds certain land in the very centre of the town, whereon on either side of *the new street to the new* railway station (an ordinary case) are arising, in reality or imagination, houses, shops, bazaars, arcades, a museum, *et hoc genus omne*, calculated to return from — to — per cent., but not calculated, as I could shew you if you were here, to add to the architectural glories of Ipswich. Well; the museum being secured, it was thought — a happy thought! that an opposite corner destitute of an occupant, could not be better appropriated than to the purposes of our Institute! Now this gentleman's son happened to be a member of this very institute's very building committee, and to be supported therein and thereon, as the very sequel will shew, with and by a majority. It was *tried on*. The gentleman's 'architect' (pronounced here most frequently artshitec) was employed 'to make a plan.' This person is one of those "members of the profession," who, not having been troubled with any servitude, real or feigned, other than that which belongeth unto the bench of the honest carpenter, is not often troubled with scruples of professional etiquette as you shall hear. Well nothing else would do. The sub-committee reported that they had found an eligible spot, and had a plan *in petto*. The great committee would have nothing to do with the land, and would have a competition for the building. Good! now comes the pith of the story. The competitionizers carried the day, but were "gravelled" to know what premium to offer: when lo! who should be opportunely outside the door, but this very man of lines and rules, this "artshitec." Call him in—ask him the question—'tis done, and he fixes the value of the

* When waves of sound are excited simultaneously in different places, each advances, according to the laws of undulatory motion, independently of the other. Where they meet, they cross each other's path, and after this intersection each pursues its course unaltered. From this circumstance we may comprehend how several sounds and notes may be heard at once. It is only at their points of intersection that they affect each other, by adding to or diminishing their force or even by neutralizing each other, when *interference* occurs.

Exp. Hold a tuning-fork in a state of vibration, so near to the ear that its tone can be easily distinguished: if its handle be turned round with moderate quickness, it will be observed that the sound seems almost to cease, when the aperture of the ear is in a line with the diagonal drawn through one of the prongs, and that it is most plainly heard when the flat face of the prong is towards the ear. This change in the increase and decrease of the strength with which the sound falls upon the ear takes place four times in each revolution. To perform this experiment so that several persons may perceive it at the same time, turn the tuning-fork round over the mouth of a glass flask.—*Peschel's Elements of Physics.*

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